*[Translation]*

**Telephone Service in Firozabad**

2969. PROF. OMPAL SINGH NIDAR : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Department of Telephone have divided Firozabad district into two parts;

(b) whether the Government propose to open D.M.T. office in Firozabad district of Uttar Pradesh;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Not applicable in view of (b) above.

(d) Firozabad is a part of Agra/Mainpuri Secondary Switching Areas (SSAs). There is already an office of GMT at Agra and that of TDE at Mainpuri. There is thus no justification for an independent D.M.T. office at Firozabad.

**Mining of Sand to Fishermen in Uttar Pradesh**

2970. SHRI GANGA CHARAN RAJPUT : Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state :

(a) the norms fixed for mining of sand in Uttar Pradesh;

(b) whether the Government propose to allot the mining work of sand and redsand to fishermen community;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) the number of times lease of sand being given to this community in the State during the last three years;

(e) whether the Government have received complaints in regard to allotment of work of mining lease;

(f) if so, the details thereof; and

(g) the steps taken against guilty officials?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA) : (a) to (g). The grant of quarry lease, mining lease and other mineral concessions in respect of Minor minerals like ordinary sand and building stones are regulated in accordance with the provisions of Minor Mineral Concession Rules framed by the State Governments. It is only in respect of the minerals specified in the First Schedule of the Mines and Minerals (Regulation and Development) Act, 1957 that no prospecting licence/ mining lease can be granted except with the prior approval of the Central Government. As sand is not listed in First Schedule of the Mines and Minerals (Regulation and Development) Act, 1957, prior approval of the Central Government is not required to be obtained and hence the Central Government does not monitor pendency for grant of mineral concession for Minor minerals.

**Gauge Conversion**

2971. SHRI FAGGAN SINGH KULESTE : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any scheme for the conversion of Jabalpur-Bhanda-Nainpur via Gondia meter gauge railway line into broad gauge; and

(b) if so, the time by which the conversion work is likely to be started and completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The work is included in the first phase of Action Plan and would be taken up in the coming years.

**Steel Industry**

2972. SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ :

JUSTIC GUMAN MAL LODHA :

Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state :

(a) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the news item captioned, 'Steel Industry to stage recovery in second half' appearing in the Economic Times deted October 2, 1996;

(b) if so, whether it is a fact that although the domestic consumption level of steel is low while the prices of steel have marked an increase during the first six months of 1996-97;

(c) if so, whether due t price-rise imported steel has become cheaper as compared to the domestically produced steel;

(d) if not, the factual position in this regard;

(e) whether it is also a fact that Steel Industry has lodged a complaint to the Government that foreigners are dumping steel in the country; and

(f) if so, the action taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA) : (a) Yes. Sir.

(b) The apparent consumption of finished steel for the first six months of 1996-97 has been 10.375 million tonnes, registering an increase of about 9.3% as compared to the corresponding period previous year.

(c) and (d). The competitiveness of Indian steel vis-a-vis imported steel in the domestic market would depend upon various factors such as quality, landed cost at ports, freight to location of consumer, etc. As per available information for the month of October, 1996, the landed cost at ports, calculated on the basis of average import prices, of Tin Plates (Oil-can-size), Billets (IS-2830; 80/100 mm), pig iron (LM Gr. IV and HR Coil TMQ 2mm) was less than the existing policy, import of steel is freely allowed. However, provision exists in the Customs Tariff Act, 1975 and the rules framed thereunder to investigate cases of dumping and levy an additional customs duty, if it is established that such dumping causes material injury to the domestic industry. The Designated Authority under the aforesaid Act has not, as on 05.12.1996, received any petition for imposition of Anti-Dumping Duties on any steel product.

*[English]*

**AIR Station, Leh**

2973. SHRI P. NAMGYAL : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have received complaints from Leh Station of AIR regarding distortion of Ladakhi culture and language together with frequent breakdown of the transmitter and poor relaying system;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) Yes, Sir. Some Comlaints about falling standards of programmes along with breakdowns in transmitter operation and deterioration of relay quality from AIR, Leh have been received in the past.

(b) Breakdown details for AIR, Leh for the year 1994-95, 1995-96 and from April 1996 to June 1996 are enclosed in the statement.

(c) VHF link and microwave links between studio and transmitter at AIR, Leh have been provided to ensure better quality of broadcast. Efforts are being made on a continuous basis to improve the working of AIR Station, Leh. The Station has been asked to review the programmes and ensure that these are tailored to meet the requirements of listeners.

**STATEMENT**

*Details of Breakdowns of AIR Leh during 1994-95, 1995-96 and from April, 1996 to June, 1996*

| Year | Irg. His Radiated | Gear B D | % of Gear Gear B D | P/s B D | Percen-tage | Other Causes of B D | Percen-tage | Total | Percen-tage (Overall) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | H M | H M | | H M | | H M | | H M | |
| 1994-95 | 7049.41 | 0.39 | 0.009 | 3.49 | 0.056 | 3.26 | 0.048 | 7.54 | 0.112 |
| 1995-96 | 7180.00 | 1.20 | 0.017 | 1.05 | 0.013 | 4.43 | 0.06 | 7.08 | 0.091 |
| April, 1996 to June, 1996 | 1980.00 | 05.18 | 0.252 | 0.20 | 0.016 | 0.04 | - | 5.42 | 0.30 |

*[Translation]*

**Train Accident**

2974. SHRI DADA BABURAO PARANJPE : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the 1348 up passenger train going from Agra to Jhansi met with an accident on the evening of November 3, 1996 near Sank Station situated in Central Railway Zone as a result of which its engine turned upside down and five bogies were derailed;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government have conducted any enquiry in this regard;

(d) if so, the findings of the enquiry; and

(e) the action taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) and (b). Yes, Sir. On 3.11.96, at 7.30 hrs, one dead loco, along with four coaches and two SLRs of 1348 Agra Cantt.-Jhansi Passenger train derailed between Morena and Sank stations of Jhansi Division of Central Railway.

(c) and (d). An enquiry conducted by a Committee of Officers has concluded that this derailment occurred due to old rail flaw.